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Press Preview: Tuesday, March 24; 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

“Inventing Marcel Duchamp: The Dynamics of Portraiture” at the National Portrait Gallery March 27 through Aug. 2

“Inventing Marcel Duchamp: The Dynamics of Portraiture” illustrates the important legacy and the continuing influence of French-American artist Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968). The exhibition features 100 portraits and self-portraits of Duchamp, ranging from 1912 to the present, and includes vintage photographs, prints, drawings, paintings, sculpture and film.

Duchamp overturned traditional ideas about art and established himself as a major figure in the art world through his reinvention of modern portraiture. His ground-breaking influence in this realm is indicated by the extraordinary body of works in this exhibition.

“Marcel Duchamp profoundly changed the world’s concept of what defines both art and portraiture,” said Martin E. Sullivan, director of the National Portrait Gallery. “His work and the art of portrayal inspired by his work illustrate the Portrait Gallery’s mission to present biography and portraiture.”

A master of self-invention, Duchamp recast accepted modes for assembling and describing identity throughout his long career. In so doing, he challenged and reshaped the terms of portraiture, creating techniques that continue to inspire artists today. Included in this exhibition are many such works, such as Katherine Dreier’s abstract portrait of Duchamp, Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven’s sculptural portrayal of Duchamp using feathered plumes emerging from a wineglass (preserved in a vintage photograph by Charles Sheeler) and Jean Crotti’s schematic wire construction “Portrait de Marcel Duchamp sur mesure” (preserved in a vintage photograph by Peter A. Juley).

The likenesses by 58 other artists in the exhibition often evoke the spirit of Duchamp’s own work. Objects in the show represent both his contemporaries and current working artists who demonstrate his lasting influence in the art world. Artists include Richard Avedon, Joseph Cornell,

Mel Bochner, Douglas Gordon, Jasper Johns, Yasumasa Morimura, Arnold Newman, Man Ray, Jonathan Santlofer, Alfred Stieglitz, Florine Stettheimer, Mark Tansey and Andy Warhol.

Several new discoveries have resulted from exhibition research. Among the most exciting are locating a lost 1937 portrait of Duchamp created by Daniel MacMorris; reuniting Frederick Kiesler's eight-part portrait drawing of Duchamp with the freestanding sculptural frame created for the piece and uncovering new information about Duchamp's important connection with the little-known New York-based sculptor Ettore Salvatore, whose life mask of Duchamp has long been overlooked.

Objects in the exhibition have been loaned from other museums at the Smithsonian Institution, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and numerous private collections.

"Inventing Marcel Duchamp: The Dynamics of Portraiture," a 320-page catalog published by the National Portrait Gallery and MIT Press, will accompany the exhibition. The publication is co-authored by curators of the exhibition Anne Collins Goodyear, assistant curator of prints and drawings at the National Portrait Gallery, and James W. McManus, professor of art history at California State University, Chico; additional essays were contributed by Janine A. Mileaf, assistant professor, Department of Art, Swarthmore College; Francis M. Naumann, independent scholar and dealer; and Michael R. Taylor, Muriel and Philip Berman curator of modern art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It will be available in the museum store for \$50.

This exhibition has been generously supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Studies Grant, the Florence Gould Foundation, the Marc Pachter Exhibition Fund and Ella Foshay. Additional support was provided by Mary McMorris and Leonard Santoro as well as Aaron and Barbara Levine.

The National Portrait Gallery

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery tells the history of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story.

The National Portrait Gallery is part of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture at Eighth and F streets N.W., Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Web site: npg.si.edu.

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